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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uruguay*

1. The Committee considered the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Uruguay (CEDAW/C/URY/8-9) at its 1417th and 1418th meetings, on 14 July 2016 (see CEDAW/C/SR.1417 and 1418). The Committee's list of issues and questions is contained in CEDAW/C/URY/Q/8-9 and the responses of Uruguay are contained in CEDAW/C/URY/Q/8-9/Add.1.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its combined eighth and ninth periodic reports. It also appreciates the State party's written replies to the list of issues and questions raised by the pre-sessional working group and welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its delegation, which was headed by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Ricardo González Arenas, and also included the Director of the National Women's Institute, parliamentarians, members of the judiciary and representatives of the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of the Interior.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since its consideration in 2008 of the State party's combined fourth to seventh periodic reports (CEDAW/C/URY/7), in particular the adoption of the following legislation:

(a) Act No. 19.353 of 27 November 2015, creating a national integrated care system;

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session (4-22 July 2016).

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(b) Act No. 18.868 of 23 December 2011, prohibiting the requirement for a negative pregnancy test upon hiring or at any other time during an employment relationship;

(c) Act No. 19.161 of 1 November 2013, providing for maternity, paternity and breastfeeding leave;

(d) Act No. 18.250 of 6 January 2008, recognizing equal rights for Uruguayan nationals and foreigners;

(e) Act No. 19.122 of 21 August 2013 and Decree No. 144/014 of 22 May 2014, recognizing discrimination against persons of African descent and providing for positive measures of redress;

(f) Act No. 18.987 of 22 October 2012, providing access to interruption of pregnancy within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy;

(g) Act No. 18.651 of 19 February 2010, establishing a comprehensive protection system for persons with disabilities;

(h) Act No. 18.620 of 25 October 2009, on the right to a gender identity and to change one's name and sex in identity documents;

(i) Act No. 18.561 of 11 September 2009, on sexual harassment;

(j) Act No. 18.590 of 18 September 2009, providing for adoption by same-sex couples;

(k) Act No. 18.426 of 1 December 2008 and its regulations adopted in 2010, on the right to sexual and reproductive health;

(l) Decree No. 398/13 of 13 December 2013 regarding the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of girls, boys and adolescents in tourist activities.

5. The Committee takes notes of the adoption of Act No. 19.075 of 3 May 2013, authorizing same-sex marriages.

6. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting the human rights of women, including the adoption of the following:

(a) Action plan for a life free from gender-based violence, covering the period 2016-2019;

(b) Decree No. 321/015, to create the National Council to Coordinate Public Policies on Sexual Diversity, in 2015;

(c) Executive Decree No. 588 of 2014, to a create a system of protection and assistance for trafficked persons;

(d) National plan for the prevention of cervical cancer, in 2012;

(e) Decree No. 382 of 2012, to create the National Office of Domestic and Gender Violence, which reports cases of violence to the national police;

(f) Comprehensive programme to combat gender-based violence, in 2011.

7. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party has ratified or acceded to the following instruments:

(a) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization, in 2012;

(b) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, in 2009;

(c) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2009, and the Optional Protocol thereto, in 2011.

C. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Parliament

8. The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see the statement by the Committee on its relationship with parliamentarians, adopted at the forty-fifth session, in 2010). It invites the parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the next reporting period under the Convention.

Women of African descent

9. The Committee commends the State party on having taken important action to promote racial equality with regard to the historical patterns of discrimination against the Uruguayan population of African descent and welcomes the State party's recognition of that segment of the population in the most recent census. That action has not, however, eliminated the problem and de facto, intersecting discrimination against Uruguayan women of African descent persists and can be seen in the disproportionate level of educational exclusion, early pregnancies, lower salaries, more disadvantageous incorporation into the workforce and lower levels of public and political participation.

10. The Committee recommends that the State party take anti-discriminatory measures in favour of Uruguayan women of African descent as established under Act No. 19.122 and Decree No. 144/014, including the following:

(a) Strengthen continuous awareness-raising campaigns about racism against Uruguayan women of African descent;

(b) Establish temporary special measures to increase access to economic, social and cultural rights and political participation;

(c) Actively monitor, supervise and coordinate State responses aimed at dismantling systemic discrimination.

Legislative framework and visibility of the Convention

11. The Committee notes that the Convention prevails over Uruguayan national laws and forms part of the national legislative framework that can be invoked and directly applied by the courts. The Committee commends the State party on its efforts to train public authorities about the international standards enshrined in the Convention, but observes with concern:

(a) The limited knowledge and awareness of the Convention among public officials and lower-level judges, as evidenced by the scarce references to the Convention in legal decisions;

(b) The low visibility of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, which limits the awareness of women of their right to live free from discrimination and of the mechanisms available to claim protection of their rights under the Convention;

(c) The persistence of a legal framework containing discriminatory provisions against women, in particular the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure;

(d) The uneven implementation of legislation against gender discrimination throughout the country.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Strengthen measures to disseminate the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations among government officials and parliamentarians, and intensify existing capacity-building activities among the judicial system and legal professionals regarding how to invoke or directly apply the Convention in court proceedings;

(b) Adopt a strategy to enhance women's awareness of their rights and the means to enforce them under the Convention, engaging all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, women's organizations, unions and academic institutions;

(c) Amend legislation to eliminate gender-based discrimination, especially in the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, and adopt mechanisms to periodically review and modify legislation and provisions that are discriminatory towards women;

(d) Introduce indicators to monitor the implementation of legislation and public policies aimed at eliminating gender discrimination throughout the entire country.

Access to justice and remedies

13. The Committee notes that the State party has established specialized family courts with competence to hear cases of domestic violence, in addition to multidisciplinary advisory teams and ombudspersons' offices, which provide advice and recommendations on issues relating to domestic violence. The Committee remains concerned, however, about the persistence of structural barriers in the justice system that prevent women from gaining access to justice and obtaining redress, namely:

(a) The length and complexity of legal proceedings in family courts, and the duplication of proceedings among jurisdictions;

(b) The limited availability and accessibility of specialized family courts in rural and border areas;

(c) The absence of a specific complaint mechanism in cases relating to all forms of gender-based discrimination;

(d) The limited access of women to legal assistance and information regarding the remedies available to them;

(e) The persisting prejudices in judicial sentencing that result in a lack of protection for women who bring cases to court, in addition to the limited expertise among prosecutors and police officers regarding women's rights;

(f) The lack of human and financial resources of the national human rights institution and the Office of the Ombudsperson.

14. The Committee, in line with its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, calls upon the State party:

(a) To review and simplify the proceedings before the specialized family courts for women seeking judicial protection mainly in cases of gender-based violence, provide direct recourse to criminal courts for women who are victims of violence and expedite communication between women claimants and judicial bodies;

(b) To expand the coverage of specialized family courts across the territory of the State party, including in rural and border areas, and ensure continuous capacity-building programmes for law enforcement officers, including judges and prosecutors, on women's human rights and gender equality;

(c) To design effective remedies, including being able to submit complaints to administrative authorities and quasi-judicial remedies, for women who have faced discrimination on the basis of sex and gender;

(d) Ensure that gender-sensitive legal assistance is provided to all women seeking justice for violations of their human rights;

(e) Establish a mechanism to collect information about case law at all levels of the judicial system, with the aim of monitoring the effectiveness of law enforcement regarding complaints filed by women, in particular of violence and other forms of discrimination;

(f) Ensure that the national human rights institution and the Office of the Ombudsperson are provided with adequate human and financial resources to enable them to fulfil their mandates effectively.

National machinery for the advancement of women

15. The Committee welcomes the role of and numerous initiatives carried out by the National Women's Institute, including the budgetary allocations for gender equality. It also notes the existence of bodies to contribute to the implementation of the gender equality agenda, such as the National Gender Council and gender commissions within the Government, quality committees and gender networks. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The lack of institutional autonomy of the National Women's Institute, as observed by the Committee in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/URY/CO/7, para. 15), given that the Institute continues to be a directorate under the Ministry of Social Development;

(b) The overlapping among councils and gender commissions in ministries and decentralized public entities that impedes coherent gender mainstreaming in policies and budgets at the national, subnational and local levels;

(c) The uneven involvement of women's organizations in the initiatives of public offices for the advancement of women, especially at the local level.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Consider upgrading the rank of the National Women's Institute to the ministerial level with authority to directly coordinate all public policies and strategies for gender equality and to ensure appropriate financial resources and a mandate for implementing programmes for the advancement of women, including gender-responsive budgeting with relevant gender units operating at the subnational level;

(b) Enhance coordination between the National Women's Institute as the lead entity and the gender commissions, and strengthen monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of legislation and public policies for the advancement of women, especially at the national, subnational and local levels;

(c) Ensure the active participation of women's organizations and other civil society organizations, including academic institutions, research institutes, unions, organizations of Uruguayan women of African descent and organizations of women with disabilities, in the implementation of public policies for the advancement of women.

Stereotypes and discriminatory practices

17. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes, including legislation to combat discrimination against lesbian, transgender, transsexual and intersex persons and homophobia, but remains concerned at:

(a) The persistence of patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, which perpetuate violence and discrimination against women in areas such as education, employment and health;

(b) The widespread use of gender stereotypes in the media, notwithstanding the adoption by the national television channel of a code of ethics to monitor discriminatory practices;

(c) The racism, prejudice and social exclusion suffered by Uruguayan women of African descent, notwithstanding the existence of general laws aimed at combating racial discrimination.

18. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Develop a comprehensive strategy tailored to women, men, girls and boys in order to overcome patriarchal and gender-based stereotypical attitudes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, in the education system, in the workplace and in society as a whole;

(b) Build the capacity of public and private media employees on gender equality in order to prevent discriminatory gender stereotypes in the media;

(c) Design national strategies aimed at raising awareness about discrimination against Uruguayan women of African descent and create

specific lines of action within the gender equality agenda aimed at identifying stigma against women on the basis of intersecting forms of discrimination.

Gender-based violence against women

19. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party under the action plan for a life free of gender-based violence, covering the period 2016-2019, in addition to the comprehensive programme to combat gender-based violence. It also welcomes the creation of a national domestic and gender-based violence office within the Ministry of the Interior and the establishment of 47 units specialized in combating such violence. It commends the State party on the implementation of the electronic ankle bracelet as a measure for protection of women. The Committee remains concerned, however, about:

(a) The high prevalence of domestic violence against women, including psychological, physical and sexual violence, the rise of femicide and the lack of legal recognition of certain forms of violence against women, including femicide and marital rape;

(b) Discriminatory provisions in the Criminal Code, including the patriarchal concepts of "honest behaviour", "virtue" and "public scandal", which prevent the prosecution of some forms of sexual violence against women;

(c) The low number of prosecutions and convictions in cases of violence against women, including in cases of femicide and killings of transgender women, and the delay in prosecuting gender-based violence;

(d) The lack of disaggregated information on the number of reported cases of violence against women other than domestic violence;

(e) The referral of cases of violence against women to mediation procedures contrary to the general prohibition of mediation in cases of domestic violence ratified by the Supreme Court;

(f) The limited information about access to support services for women who are victims of violence, such as medical treatment, psychological counselling, legal assistance, financial support and shelters, throughout the territory of the State party and taking into consideration women in disadvantaged situations, especially Uruguayan women of African descent and women with disabilities.

20. **The Committee calls upon the State party:**

(a) To implement and adequately fund nationwide strategies and programmes to prevent and combat domestic violence against women, including activities to raise awareness of the criminal nature of violence against women, and expedite the reform of the Criminal Code and the adoption of a comprehensive law criminalizing all forms of violence against women, ensuring as part of that reform that femicide and marital rape are recognized as criminal offences;

(b) To abolish the provisions in the Criminal Code that incorporate the patriarchal concepts of "honest behaviour", "virtue" and "public scandal" as elements of the criminal offences that affect women;

(c) To design a strategy to simplify criminal proceedings for the prosecution of gender-based violence as a matter of priority, establish

reasonable time frames for substantiating cases of gender-based violence to hold perpetrators accountable and provide guidelines for prosecutors and police officers on gender-sensitive investigation techniques and the proper use of women's testimony in cases involving violence against women and girls;

(d) To implement a nationwide system to collect comprehensive information on all forms of violence against women;

(e) To ensure that clear priority is accorded to civil and criminal proceedings over mediation or other alternative dispute resolution procedures in cases of violence against women, including domestic violence;

(f) To establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate the accessibility of protection and assistance services for victims of gender-based violence, in particular for disadvantaged groups of women such as women of African descent, women with disabilities and refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women.

Gender-based violence against women during the de facto regime

21. The Committee notes with concern the absence of specific mechanisms within the justice system aimed at providing reparations and compensation to women who suffered sexual violence and other violations of their human rights during the de facto regime in the State party from 1973 to 1985. It also notes the absence of processes aimed at establishing the truth about violations of women's human rights during that period.

22. **The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, recommends that the State party adopt a strategy to prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators of human rights violations against women during the de facto regime. It also recommends that the State party take measures to provide prompt redress, including compensation and symbolic reparation, to women who were victims of such violations.**

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

23. The Committee notes the establishment of institutional committees in the Ministry of the Interior and the National Women's Institute to tackle trafficking in persons and the development of a national plan of action in that regard, in addition to guidelines on protecting and assisting victims of trafficking. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The State party being both a transit and a destination country for trafficking in persons, especially women and girls;

(b) The lack of information on the measures taken to identify, prevent and bring prosecutions in cases of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and on the number of prosecutions and convictions in cases of trafficking.

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Adopt a more comprehensive national framework to combat trafficking in women and girls;

(b) **Establish a system to gather data, disaggregated by age, ethnic background and socioeconomic condition, on trafficking in women and girls that will allow the identification of gaps in the national framework to combat trafficking, as well as continue its efforts to prevent and prosecute trafficking and to strengthen bilateral, regional and international cooperation to prevent trafficking, including by exchanging information with other countries in the region and harmonizing legal procedures to prosecute traffickers.**

25. The Committee observes that the State party recognizes sex work (Act No. 17.515 of 4 July 2002) and has established a national registry of sex workers managed by the Ministry of the Interior. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about the lack of programmes to support women who wish to leave sex work.

26. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop exit programmes, including alternative income-generating opportunities, for women who wish to leave sex work.**

Participation in political and public life

27. The Committee remains concerned about the underrepresentation of women in political and public life, including in the parliament and in high-level decision-making positions in the Government, and the absence of measures designed to promote and support women candidates for elected bodies. Uruguay is below the regional average data with regard to the participation of women in parliament. The Committee regrets that Act No. 18.476 of 3 April 2009, which provides for the equal political participation of women and men in elected bodies, was applied only once during the elections of 2014. The Committee is also concerned about the low representation of women in the Supreme Court and in the foreign service.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt measures, including temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on the subject, such as statutory quotas for women's appointment or nomination as candidates, and monitor the progress achieved;**

(b) **Consider adopting a gender parity system for the representation of women in political and public life, including through the amendment of the electoral law;**

(c) **Develop targeted training and mentoring programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for women candidates.**

Nationality and stateless women

29. The Committee commends the State party on its legislation that protects women against discrimination on the basis of nationality, but is concerned about the absence of legislation on status determination and protection of stateless persons that would ensure that stateless women who are not refugees have equal access to documentation and to basic services.

30. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt legislation on status determination and to protect the human rights of stateless women who are not refugees and reduce their risk of discrimination, in line with its**

obligations under the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. It also recommends that the State party adopt measures to enable access to documentation for such women and to provide them with access to basic services and opportunities of resettlement, as well as adopt a system to gather data on stateless women.

Education

31. The Committee welcomes the achievements with regard to women's access to all levels of education, noting that women complete upper secondary education 30.7 per cent more often than men. It also notes that women account for 60 per cent of all university students. The Committee is, nonetheless, concerned about:

(a) The high rate at which girls are dropping out from formal education, mainly owing to early pregnancy, especially in rural areas and deprived urban areas. Adolescents of African descent are disproportionately affected and there is a lack of information on the measures taken to address the situation;

(b) The continued concentration of women in traditionally female-dominated fields of study, such as teaching;

(c) The underrepresentation of women in high-level academic positions;

(d) Gaps relating to age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and related rights;

(e) The lack of measures to increase access to education for women of African descent.

32. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Implement effective strategies to address the high rates of early pregnancy and school dropout, with measures, including scholarships, to ensure retention and facilitate the re-entry into school of young mothers, especially women and girls of African descent, rural women and girls and women living in deprived urban areas, with active monitoring up to and including tertiary education;**

(b) **Intensify career guidance activities to encourage women to pursue non-traditional career paths and raise awareness of gender equality on the part of teaching personnel at all levels of the education system;**

(c) **Promote specific actions, including temporary special measures, to improve the representation of women in decision-making positions in academic institutions and to increase the number of female professors in universities;**

(d) **Conduct periodic assessments of sex education in the national education system aimed at ensuring age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights;**

(e) **Accord priority to measures to facilitate the access to education of women of African descent, including through the use of quotas, at the university level, with periodic monitoring of progress.**

Employment

33. The Committee welcomes the increasing integration of women into the formal labour market. It also observes that there are twice as many women than men in science. The Committee commends the State party on its adoption of a national care system, which can help to address the traditionally disproportionate burden of unpaid work for women. The Committee is concerned, however, about:

(a) The higher unemployment and self-employment rates among women, with women's employment rates being lower than those of men by around 20 per cent, and the fact that unemployment especially affects women of African descent;

(b) The gender wage gap, which affects women with higher levels of education, especially in the private sector;

(c) The overrepresentation of Uruguayan women of African descent in domestic work (1 in 4 domestic workers) and the lack of effective protection for women domestic migrant workers;

(d) The lesser accumulation of social security contributions by women employed in the domestic and care sector;

(e) The low percentage of men exercising their paternity leave, notwithstanding the legislation that provides for paternity leave entitlements in all sectors of employment.

34. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Design and effectively implement strategies and time-bound targets to promote access by women, especially women of African descent, to diverse types of formal employment;**

(b) **Apply the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and establish a system for reporting on good practices aimed at eliminating the gender wage gap and promoting access by women to decision-making positions, including through preferential promotion of women and training in leadership skills for women in all areas of the economy;**

(c) **Strengthen public awareness of the rights of women domestic workers, ensuring national coverage of and accessible information about complaint mechanisms;**

(d) **Develop a national campaign to promote enrolment in and periodic contributions to the social security system by employers of domestic and care workers and raise awareness among women of social security;**

(e) **Carry out public campaigns among public and private employers to inform men about the importance of taking paternity leave and sharing care responsibilities.**

Health

35. The Committee commends the State party on drastically reducing maternal mortality and on expanding access by women to sexual and reproductive health services, but is concerned that such access remains limited in rural areas. It also notes with concern the widespread use of conscientious objection among medical practitioners, thereby limiting access to safe abortion services, which are guaranteed

by law. The Committee also expresses its concern about the high rate of early pregnancy, especially among Uruguayans of African descent and those living in rural areas and deprived urban areas.

36. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Assess the nationwide availability of sexual and reproductive health services in order to identify underserved provinces and municipalities and ensure appropriate funding;**

(b) **Take measures to ensure that women have access to legal abortion and post-abortion services and introduce stricter justification requirements to prevent the blanket use by medical practitioners of their right to conscientious objection to performing an abortion;**

(c) **Introduce age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and ensure affordable access to counselling and information on sexual and reproductive rights for adolescent girls and boys, conduct awareness-raising campaigns about modern contraceptive methods and increase access to safe and affordable contraceptives.**

Rural women

37. The Committee commends the State party on conducting its first agricultural census with a gender perspective, in 2011. It welcomes the programmes to build the capacity of rural women to engage in business, the programmes to secure access to high-quality energy services and the training for rural women in the construction of simple technologies. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The low employment rate among rural women (only 37 per cent of the rural workforce);

(b) The limited access of rural women to land title and ownership (only 11.6 per cent of all women are land owners) and their lack of participation in decision-making processes concerning the use of land and means of production;

(c) Gaps in social protection affecting rural women, especially in the areas of education, health care, living conditions and social security.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Continue its efforts to promote income-generating opportunities for and encourage entrepreneurship by rural women;**

(b) **Ensure that rural women have access to land on an equal basis with men by raising awareness about the importance of access to land as a factor for development;**

(c) **Ensure that rural women enjoy equal access to basic services and social protection.**

Disadvantaged groups of women

Refugee and stateless women

39. The Committee notes that the State party has adopted programmes for the social inclusion and/or resettlement of refugees and stateless persons of Colombian

and Syrian origin, but is concerned about the situation of migrant and refugee women who are at risk of violence and trafficking.

40. **In line with its general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the Committee recommends that the State party protect refugee and stateless women against sexual violence and trafficking and adequately punish perpetrators. It also recommends that the State party adopt protocols developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for conducting the refugee status determination process in a gender-sensitive manner, with full respect for the procedural rights of women in need of international protection, including by ensuring that interviews are conducted by trained female interviewers and interpreters.**

Women with disabilities

41. The Committee is concerned about the lack of disaggregated information on the situation of women and girls with disabilities in all areas covered by the Convention, in particular access to justice, violence against women, political and public life, education, employment, health care and economic empowerment.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party develop a system for the collection of data on and conduct assessments of the situation of women with disabilities in all areas covered by the Convention, in particular with regard to violence against women, education, employment and health care. It also recommends that the State party involve organizations of women with disabilities in the work of the National Women's Institute.**

Women in detention

43. The Committee is concerned about the inadequate conditions for women detained with their children and the process of relocation of detained mothers to "Unit 5" of the National Rehabilitation Institute in the city of Montevideo, resulting in that group of women facing vulnerable conditions. It is also concerned about reports of women being incarcerated in facilities designed for men where the majority of penitentiary officials are also men.

44. **The Committee, recalling the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), recommends that the State party make appropriate arrangements for the children of women detainees, including the application of alternatives to detention, taking into account the best interests of the child. It also recommends that the State party strengthen the monitoring of women in detention, in order to prevent human rights violations, and ensure that legal advice and effective avenues of redress are available.**

Marriage and family relations

45. The Committee is concerned that marriage at 16 years of age is legal in the State party. It also notes the lack of awareness concerning rights in cases of marital dissolution, especially regarding the recognition of unremunerated domestic work within the distribution of marital property, and the different economic implications of marriage versus de facto (concubine) union.

46. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Amend its legislation to strictly prohibit early marriage and ensure that girls and boys under 18 years of age do not enter into marriage except in strictly defined circumstances with authorization by a court and with the consent of both spouses;

(b) Ensure that any assessment of the parental responsibilities of girls and boys is guided by the principle of the best interests of the child and their right to have their views taken into full account;

(c) Ensure the equal distribution of joint property between both partners upon dissolution of a marriage or a de facto (concubine) union, and take all measures necessary to ensure that women entering marriage or de facto (concubine) union are aware of the economic implications that they entail, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on article 16 of the Convention (economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution), and guarantee that unremunerated domestic work is adequately taken into consideration when distributing joint property.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

47. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

48. The Committee calls for the realization of substantive gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Dissemination

49. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

Follow-up to the concluding observations

50. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 20 (a) and (f) and 32 (a) and (c) above.

Preparation of the next report

51. The Committee invites the State party to submit its tenth periodic report in July 2020.

52. The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).